



Blackjack Monthly

From the Commander:



I want to take a minute and thank all who made our holidays special. The FRG came together and made several stockings for everyone. The wonderful city of Las Vegas sent countless packages and letters. In particular, I want to recognize Curves on N. Jones Street, Las Vegas, and the Las Vegas Wranglers for their generous gifts. Audrie Dodge continues to amaze me. She coordinated for company T-shirts, which look fantastic, and sent an electronic dart board, which we will place somewhere for all Soldiers to use. The Sierra Nevada Chapter of the Blue Star Mothers of America had children send so many wonderful letters from children it was overwhelming. There are many more who went out of their way to make us feel special. These efforts honor us and truly made a difference to our morale while away from home. Thank you doesn't seem enough.



This has been another great month for Blackjack. We promoted four Soldiers. Congratulations to SSG Raylasun Williams, CW2 Robert Roberts, CW2 Jeffery McCartney, and CW2 Pablo Melendez. All are fine examples of professionalism ready for bigger challenges and deserving of the next higher rank. I look forward to their continued success. SSG Homer Jenkins, SPC Brandi Mitzel, SPC Jason Lawson, and SPC Scott Terrell reenlisted to continue serving our great nation. SPC Michael Edilson made a Christmas sled and New Year's ball much like the one dropped at Times Square, New York. We repaired several pieces of equipment, and saw our Soldiers return from R&R leave. Kayla McCormick was selected as the Brigade volunteer of the month. This is the first time in about three years someone with 426th received such an honor. SGT Michelle Buff won the NCO of the month competition and SPC Michaelas Thomas won the Soldier of the month competition. I am proud of all.

On January 18th, 1LT Michelle Clausen (Wylie) will depart Blackjack to become a Battalion Battle Captain. She was a key member of the Blackjack Team instrumental in keeping the company operation going by serving as a platoon leader, executive officer, and shop officer. We will wish her a fond farewell and she goes on to bigger and better things. She will provide oversight on the entire battalion mission for her next assignment. This is by no means easy, but I am confident she will succeed as the right person, at the right time, for the right job. 1LT Amanda Durham will become the Shop Officer and provide oversight on the company mission. Amanda is a smart, confident, and insightful leader ready for the next big thing.

We have two new additions to the Blackjack Team in PFC Jason Hiscox and PFC Jeremiah McGee. PFC Hiscox is an armament repairer and comes to us after a tour in Korea. He is married to Elizabeth Hiscox. PFC McGee is a wheeled mechanic and comes to us from Advanced Individual Training. We welcome all to the team.

Before I took command, an Iraqi Colonel asked another Soldier, "Why did you decide to join the military?" This answer requires an honest look into why. I certainly had to. I was in the middle of a letter to a friend and thought I would share my reasons with you. I do this because I don't want the next generation to have to deal with this. Much like when we did not finish the job in 1991. Take a minute to look around and see 8 year olds playing. If we don't get this right now, they will have to. It is bad enough they will face other problems we leave for them today. At the very least, I will give them freedom and a hope for prosperity.

Despite what you have seen on the TV, things are getting better. You may hear about the brave Soldiers who died because it is news, but the media hardly shows the more than 32,000 improvement projects resulting in new schools, remodeled playgrounds, improved jobs, better commercial areas, and better trained and equipped military. Most important is the optimistic outlook the people here have. Although we can't please everyone; most feel they are better off now, and many more feel things will be even better a year from now. That is huge and a clear sign we are winning.

Now that the holidays are over and the euphoria has gone, it is important to remember why we are doing this. Equally important is to know you are not alone. As we again settle into our normal routines, depression may creep upon anyone. Here, we have stress control counselors. There are many sources to find help back home. The family advocacy at FT Campbell and the Army One Source is a phone call or e-mail away just for you should you ever feel overwhelmed. Do not be too proud, I encourage you take advantage of these fine programs if you feel the need. May God bless our fine Soldiers, the wonderful families back home, and our great nation.

Matt Jenkins
Commanding



Soldiers of Headquarters

By SPC Angela Beng



The Headquarters Section Top row: 1LT Amanda Durham, SSG David Carr, SSG Meriam Nelper Middle row: PFC Algie Blackmon, PFC David Anthony. Bottom row: SPC Michael Edilson, SPC Angela Beng, CPT Matt Jenkins, SPC Shaneeka Hickling

"Watch out!" "Duck" all hell is breaking out in the Blackjack Command Post (CP). Actually its 1SG Freeman throwing Nerf balls at his staff. While there is fun and laughter in the CP, there is also work to be done.

Take SPC Edilson for example. He is our go to man. He handles the R&U requests that keep the CP and the rest of the Blackjack shops up and running. He is also the Armorer, insuring that weapons remain secured while soldiers are on R&R Leave. SPC Edilson's other talents include being a craftsman with a artist eye as we have all seen with the Gator Sled and New Years Ball.

Right along side of SPC Edilson helping him with many of his projects is SPC Hickling, who is our NBC specialist. Besides doing her job well, she is a very valued asset to the CP. She ensures the platoon sergeants keep up with their soldier's paperwork. She also helped the supply personnel with many of their tasks.

SSG Nelper and PFC Blackman are two very important people in the company. They have just completed a month long of inventories with the new Commander. They have turned the supply room into a very functional organized work area. Because of that they where able to order, everyone in Blackjack has what they need for their ACU'S. They continue to insure soldiers save what they need to carry out their missions.

Next up we have SPC Beng, who is the orderly room clerk. Her tasks, along with SPC Hickling, include handling soldiers financial paperwork, R&R leave, pointing soldiers in the right direction to help them with of their issues, doing radio watch, keeping the chain of command up to date, and of course the most important task, insuring that the mail is picked up everyday and distributed to the platoon sergeants hands.

Also with us in the orderly room is SGT Orozco, who just returned to us from the Gun Platoon. She makes sure we have a steady PT plan, we are up to date with company events, and other events happening on FOB Warrior.

Remaining are SGT Brooks and PFC Anthony, who make up the night shift at the CP. They complete a faithful job at radio watch, take care of important issues (such as Red Cross messages) in a timely fashion, and have put the finishing touches on work.

It takes all of the CP staff to help make Blackjack CP a smooth running 24 hour operation.



The Men of Respect

By SSG Marcellus Pierre



The S&R section is separated into two elements to support the company, battalion, and brigade. Our war time mission is to provide recovery support within the forward operating base (FOB) of operation and to provide metal working capabilities.

The first section is the welding shop consisting of SGT Lee Menzies serving, as shop foreman, SGT Zachary Lewis squad leader, SGT Adam Peacock serves as recovery specialist. We have a very talented group of soldiers that work well together in the section, SPC Crawford and SPC Mejia, serve as half of our welding support team. The two of these soldiers have completed over 100 different metal working jobs and over 20 fabrication jobs, they are truly assets to our team. The second section is the Recovery shop, consisting of SPC Adam Durham, SPC Steven Street, SPC Jason Moss and SPC Travis Terrell.



Top row: SGT Adam Peacock, SPC Travis Terrell, SSG Marcellus Pierre, SGT Zachary Lewis, SPC Jason Moss, SPC John Crawford
Bottom row: SPC Steven Street, SPC Luis Mejia, SPC Adam Durham, CW3 Robert Miller

These soldiers are solely responsible for the recovery of all elements within the battalion's area of operation. This area is largely handled by elements twice the size of our Recovery shop, due to this the soldiers are asked, to work 14 to 17 hour days and are always on call. The Recovery shop has performed over 90 recovery missions, and has supported our sister companies in over 80 convoy logistic patrols (CLP). Although the Soldiers work long hours and are rarely afforded the time to relax, they find time to sign up for schools, call home and enjoy Company functions.

As in any section, the two sections from within that maintain the level of performance and professionalism would fall on the NCOIC and the OIC. In the Service and Recovery section, Chief Robert Miller (CW3) and SSG Marcellus D. Pierre (NCOIC) maintain the section by ensuring that all jobs and tasks are understood and perform in a timely manner. As in most companies within the walls of the Army, Service and Recovery sections are overlooked by many. The men and women, at war and deployed to various areas of operations are always in front helping all who cross their path.



WHAT'S MY JOB AS A BLACKJACK SOLDIER?

By PFC Brian Kramer



Jobs that are in the maintenance platoon range from 7 different MOS's (military occupational skill) starting with the leadership and all the way down to the lowest level these jobs have different meaning and is very important to our maintenance program and mission success as a Blackjack maintenance platoon soldier.

63B- Light Wheeled Vehicle Mechanic: 96% of the platoon is a make up of this job from PV2 to SSG, this where the rubber meets the road. We provide maintenance support thru the 426 BSB and the 1st BCT, we perform maintenance on all wheeled vehicles arranging from ¼ ton trailers to 60 ton Super HET (Heavy Equipment Transporter) vehicle, repairing wiring harnesses up to engine replacement.

63X- Maintenance Supervisor- Two positions in the platoon has this MOS, The Battalion Motor Sergeant whom is SFC Rackley has the overall responsibility and accountability for the maintenance platoon soldiers and equipment, He makes sure that we as soldiers have what we need to perform the maintenance mission. The next position is the Platoon Sergeant which is SSG Davis, As a Platoon Sergeant he is responsible for the overall training, health, morale and welfare of the platoon and state of fitness of all the personnel within the platoon, his job is also to ensure that all paperwork professional and/or personal pertaining to his Soldiers, NCOs and Officers are corrected and turned in on time with no problems, SSG Davis also ensures that all the information of duties and special tasking from the 1SG gets passed throughout the squad leaders and he provides mentorship to his squad leaders.

915A- Automotive Maintenance Warrant- This job title is for one person and that is CW2 Poisson, His overall responsibility is to send up all maintenance reports and statuses to our BN SPO office. He also attend maintenance meetings to address all maintenance issues, Mr. Poisson is also the technical expert in our line of maintenance.

91A- Maintenance and Munitions Officer- This is the job of the commissioned officer that is assigned this identifier through DA. Our Platoon Leader is 2LT Carter, He is the Officer In Charge of the platoon, He and the Platoon Sergeant oversee all the daily operations and status of all the personnel within the maintenance platoon, The Platoon Leader addresses all issues that can't be handled at the soldier/ NCO level and ensures that all areas of special emphasis are covered. These jobs are what make up a blackjack maintenance platoon soldier.



PFC Brian Kramer



Keeping Busy: With Style

By PFC Jacob Lilburn



SPC Lance Schwartz, PFC Jacob Lilburn, and SPC Julio Negrón

The Armament Section of Bravo Company, 426th Brigade Support Battalion is steadily plugging along through their year over seas. Although work flow is unsteady, we keep ourselves busy through tasks set for ourselves most of the time. SPC Schwartz and the civilian contractor Mike Thompson made new desks and shelving for the shop office to completely reorganize their space. SPC

Negrón was in charge of the shop for a month while SSG Thompson was on R+R leave. PFC Lilburn just returned from leave as well. SPC Mitzel has been sent to the Brigade Internment Facility to be a guard for the upcoming months. On the occasions the armament section gets work to do, they amazed the 82nd Airborne Division Soldiers prompt and complete production. The section looks forward to the return of two Soldiers of their shop whom have supported the greater good in other ways. SGT Chard will return off of his duty on the Gun truck team and SPC Richthammer will soon return from helping 2/320th.

During their off time, the shop members keep fairly busy. Some use their time by staying in shape with spin classes or making regular visits to the gym. The Clamtina (which is an Air force recreational center) always has something going on. There are miscellaneous activities such as bingo night, pool tournaments, and different card tournaments. Some of the soldiers use their spare time as a good opportunity to get some college courses out of the way such as SPC Mitzel and SPC Negrón. They will begin their classes shortly as they are waiting on the books for the classes they have chosen. Keeping busy has been the easiest way to make this deployment seem shorter.



Soldiers GSE section

By SPC David Barnes



GSE stands for Ground Support Equipment and each Soldier has a personal area of expertise. Whether it is generators, forklifts, or water purification systems; no task is too hard. Everyone does their job to the best of his/her abilities. Great things happen in the section and everyone stays motivated.

Our 62 Bravos keep equipment operating when it comes to retches or forklifts. One can bet that if a hydraulic line or cylinder needs to be replaced; SGT Cannady, SPC Lawson, or PFC Torres will get the job done in a safe and timely fashion.

Some of the Soldiers serve the greater good on various details. This proves GSE Soldiers are not one dimensional. PFC Kim, one of our generator mechanics, has been given the responsibility of working at the Brigade Internment Facility. SPC Zumdom and PFC Torres serve on Battalion gun teams while PFC Anthony works at the company doing various tasks.

SPC Barnes and PFC Banks, our 63 Juliets, are truly jacks of all trades. They can work on anything that comes into the shop. SPC Johnson and PFC Burke's primary job is to fix any problems with the air conditioners giving soldiers a comfortable ride where ever they may go.

SFC Argueza, our section sergeant, takes care of all the paperwork and provides the answers to customer's questions. Last but not least is SSG Alcivar, the shop foreman, who makes sure jobs get done safely and correctly. He also inspects the work before the equipment is returned to the customers.

GSE soldiers are no strangers to work or Iraq. We have been here before and will complete any job put before them.



SPC Jason Lawson cuts a hydraulic hose



Soldiers of C&E

By PFC Jason Hiscox



We are apart of the best maintenance company in the Army. The mission of the shop is to support the 1st Brigade Combat Team. This is a mission we are proud to have. Each member of the shop has there own area of expertise. CW2 Melendez is our OIC. SSG Peterson is our NCOIC. He assigns what is to be done and when and is overall responsible for what happens, and what doesn't happen. SGT Hoepner is the Shop Foreman; he ensures that we stay busy completing jobs and make certain we cross train on new and old equipment. SGT Buff manages the Production Control Section (PC). Her duties include tracking all equipment that flows through the shop including equipment that we send out to other places to be repaired. SGT Davis is our Squad Leader and Section Sergeant. He is our direct supervisor; when we have a problem he makes it his personal mission to help us solve it. SPC Detweiler repairs communications equipment. SPC Foltz repairs special electronic devices and assist SGT Buff in the PC section. SPC Kitsos is the resident Mr. Fix It. If we can't figure it out, he normally assist us to come to the desired result. PFC Putzulu is the company communications guru. If it needs installing or setting up, he does it. Last but not least is the new edition to our shop, PFC Hiscox. He is eager to learn and willing to get in where he fits in. As you can see our shop contains an array of special skills and special people.



PFC Jason Hiscox and SPC Robert Detweiler

The atmosphere and camaraderie of our shop would be tough to match anywhere on the forward operating base. Our NCOs are always showing us new and more efficient ways of doing things, and our recent addition of new electrical equipment is no exception. Working hands-on with these systems has given us learning opportunities we wouldn't get anywhere else in the field of electronic countermeasures. These systems are saving soldiers' lives and are on the cutting edge of technology. It feels good to know that we have a hand in it. We are proud to be serving in Iraq with the members of Bravo Company 426 BSB.